

## **B. Juror Education/Appreciation**

<b>Objective</b>	Juror education programs and materials remind citizens of the importance of jury duty and emphasize the vital role jurors play in the justice system. Treating jurors with respect and appreciation makes service a rewarding, educational experience for the juror and gives the court an opportunity to enhance public understanding of the courts.
<b>Potential Audience</b>	Public in general, jurors, and prospective jurors (not an exhaustive list).
<b>Format</b>	Brochures, articles, speeches, Web sites, special events, post-trial discussions with jurors, and juror exit surveys.
<b>Content</b>	The vital role jurors play in the justice system. Information about the justice system, the responsibilities of being a juror, and volunteer/community collaboration opportunities with the court. Minimize delay, frustration, and intrusion into jurors' lives.
<b>Getting the Word Out</b>	For special events, send news releases to the local media and allied organizations. Display brochures in various locations of the courthouse and at local libraries. Mail brochures with jury duty summons. Encourage news articles and editorials. Encourage judges to take an active role in juror orientation. Impress on them the significance jurors place on the "live person" who welcomes them and explains what to expect and reasons for delays.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Exit surveys.



## **Key Points for Organizing Juror Education/Appreciation Programs**

1. Survey jurors for their opinions about the various aspects of their service, including waiting time, information, scheduling, and accommodations.
2. Identify ways to make jurors feel more connected to and valued by the process.
3. Provide informational materials that will enhance jurors' experience.
4. Prepare an annual report that evaluates the effectiveness of these efforts and makes recommendations for improvement.



In 1996, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury System Improvement reported to the Judicial Council:

*At times, there appears to be a serious disconnect between our rhetoric about juries and our actual treatment of jurors as individuals. Our rhetoric and law extol the importance of the jury system, ranking it on a par with fundamental due process protections and guarantees against tyrannical government. Yet jury facilities are all too often uncomfortable, unclean, antiquated and even unsafe. The courts “compensate” jurors at rates that do not even pay for lunch or parking. Jurors sitting in overcrowded jury rooms who are ordered around the courthouse begin to feel more like pawns than valued participants in the justice system. Attorneys and judges appear to conspire to keep jurors uninformed and, worse, waiting in the hall for court to begin. And, when the time finally comes to serve on a jury, the judge may discover cause to excuse particular jurors, and attorneys may, without offering any explanation whatsoever, exercise peremptory challenges. Many persons come away from having been called for jury service with the feeling that their time was not well used by the court system. “Hurry up and wait” is a complaint commonly heard.*

*The Commission unanimously agrees that all participants in the judicial system—judges, court staff, and attorneys—must treat each individual juror with the courtesy and respect due to a valued participant in the justice process. Our actions must match our rhetoric.*

Reform of the California jury system is one of the Judicial Council’s top priorities. In his 1998 “State of the Judiciary” address to the California Legislature, Chief Justice Ronald M. George urged legislators to make statutory changes to improve the conditions for jurors and to encourage and increase citizen participation on juries.

For its part, the Judicial Council intends to:

- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a database on jury system activities;
- Evaluate the cost, feasibility, and efficacy of a statewide master jury list;
- Evaluate and consider a pilot project in one or more counties to supplement Department of Motor Vehicles and registered voters’ lists with other comprehensive source lists;
- Produce a standardized jury summons format for use around the state, with appropriate modifications, that is understandable and has consumer appeal;
- Produce a professional-quality statewide juror orientation videotape for use by jury commissioners, with or without modification, to satisfy the statutory obligation of providing juror orientation; and
- Develop, in cooperation with the State Bar and the California Judges Association, a statewide jurors’ handbook.



## What Works

While activity continues on a statewide level to improve the jury system, actions can be undertaken on a local level to recognize the valuable contribution made by jurors and make educational use of the time jurors spend in court. Although most of the activities described in this section have been designed for use with trial jurors, it is important to remember that grand jurors, while called to assist prosecution in determining grounds for prosecution, are still providing a service as jurors. Without compromising their impartiality, courts should encourage those responsible for impaneling and working with grand juries to also recognize their valuable service and make educational use of their time for the justice system as a whole. Each juror who leaves the courthouse with a positive impression of the court, judicial officers, and court staff is a potential advocate for the justice system.

### Valuing Their Time

Making the best use of jurors' time is one way of saying that their time is valuable. **Judges meeting directly with jurors waiting to be impaneled is essential to making jurors feel part of the process right from the beginning.** This session gives jurors information to help them understand and perform their duties. In addition to judges speaking to jurors about the importance of their jury duty, the juror summons mailing and the jurors' time spent waiting in the assembly room are excellent forums for other educational opportunities. When mailing juror summonses or notices, the courts could expand juror understanding of the courts and their important role by including a brief educational brochure in the envelope. In jury assembly rooms, videotapes, posters, and written education materials could be provided to educate jurors more fully — and in an entertaining way — about the role and operation of the justice system and volunteer/collaboration opportunities with the courts. The more completely jurors are educated about their role and the role of the courts, and the more productive jurors experience their time to be in waiting to be called to sit on a jury, the more jurors will become “ambassadors” to the community at large.

### Programs: Public Recognition

Emphasizing the “honor” of serving on a jury can be facilitated by using publications and special events. The **Superior Court of California, County of El Dorado**, distributes the **California Judges Association** brochure, “**Jury Duty, an Honored Service.**” The brochure includes answers to questions commonly asked by jurors:

- Who may be called to serve as a juror?



- When I am summoned as a juror, what should I do?
- May I postpone my jury service to a more convenient time?
- Do I get paid for jury duty?
- How can I be a juror if my boss won't let me off?
- Is there any special way I must act in court?
- Why are there such long breaks and lunch hours during a trial?
- May I take notes?
- May jurors ask questions during the trial?
- Is it true that I must not discuss the case with anyone while it's in progress?
- May I investigate some parts of the case that aren't brought out by the attorneys?
- Why do attorneys talk with the judge out of the jurors' hearing?
- Who do I write to with suggestions about my jury service?

Also included in the brochure is a description of trial procedure, the role of jurors in the procedure, and definitions of evidence. (Contact the California Judges Association at 415-495-1999 for copies of this brochure.)

In 1977, the state legislature passed Resolution ACR 118, which designates the second full week in May as Juror Education Week. The **Superior Court of California, County of Orange**, in partnership with the County Board of Supervisors, local government agencies, and cities, celebrates **Juror Appreciation Week** in a big way. Banners declaring Juror Appreciation Week welcome jurors to courthouses, while posters spread the word in county buildings and libraries. Resolutions, proclamations, and brochures publicly recognize contributions of jurors. As a special thank you that week, jurors receive free coffee and snacks and a packet containing information about public service programs, free passes to the museum and zoo, and more. (Contact: Sandy Vale, 714-834-4602. See *Samples & Tools*.)

SOME ADVICE	Allow adequate planning time. Start planning a May event in January. The support of executive officers is essential to launching this event.
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## Programs: Exit Surveys

Soliciting feedback from jurors when they've completed their service helps measure improvement and identify weak areas. The **Superior Court of California, County of Orange**, used information obtained through juror exit survey questionnaires to prepare an annual report for judges and the court administrator. The results of such a survey can be



used to reevaluate and make changes to present operations. (Contact: Sandy Vale, 714-834-4602.)

Jurors serving the **Superior Court of California, County of San Diego** complete a one-page survey, designed for electronic scanning, that asks jurors how frequently they are called to the courtroom, how long they have waited in assembly rooms, whether they have lost income by serving as a juror, and their general impressions of the court facilities. Jurors also identify their employers and may write in suggestions to improve the juror experience. (Contact: Marilyn Laurence, 619-531-4484.)



## Samples & Tools

- ✓ **Sample: News Release, Juror Appreciation Week**  
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Orange
- ✓ **Tool: News Release, Juror Appreciation Week**
- ✓ **Sample: Poster, Juror Appreciation Week**  
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Orange
- ✓ **Sample: Certificate of Appreciation, Juror Appreciation Week**  
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Orange
- ✓ **Sample: Brochure, Los Angeles County Jury Appreciation Week**  
Source: Los Angeles County
- ✓ **Tool: Exit Survey Questionnaire**



**Sample: News Release, Juror Appreciation Week,  
Superior Court of California, County of Orange**

**Superior Court of California, County of Orange  
NEWS RELEASE**

CONTACT: Office of the Jury Commissioner  
Sandra Vale, Manager, 555-5555

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RE: JUROR APPRECIATION WEEK: MAY 11–15

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**ORANGE COUNTY COURTS    THEIR JURORS!**

During the week of May 11–15, the Orange county Trial Courts will recognize jurors for their invaluable contribution to the justice system with the courts' version of TLC. At each of the courthouses (Santa Ana, Orange, Fullerton, Westminster, Harbor and Laguna Niguel), banners of appreciation will be displayed and court staff will donate homemade goodies and other treats to jurors in the assembly rooms. Drawings for gifts, also donated by court staff, will be held throughout the week, and each juror will receive a special packet consisting of a Certificate of Appreciation, discount coupons and informational brochures from various service agencies. Pending plans also include developing posters for such public locations as libraries, recreation centers and government buildings, with the aim of reaching jurors of the past and future with a message that not only offers thanks but emphasizes the vital importance of jury service.

This is the second year the Orange County Trial Courts have taken the initiative in honoring their jurors, and Jury Commissioner Alan Slater was instrumental in enlisting the participation of Assemblyman Bill Morrow, who authored ACR 118, which is currently pending in the Legislature. The resolution, co-sponsored by the Jury Education and Management Forum (a statewide organization of jury managers), the California Association of Trial Court Administrators and the Judicial Council, will officially establish the second week in May as a statewide annual celebration of Juror Appreciation Week.





**Tool: News Release—Juror Appreciation Week**

**For more information,  
Contact: (name, phone)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**(name) Court  
Holds Juror Appreciation Week  
(date)**

(city, date)—(name of court) is sponsoring Juror Appreciation Week to recognize (name) County residents who have served on jury duty and to highlight the honor and importance of serving on a jury.

Included in the week's activities are: (list activities, days, times)

According to (name of spokesperson), the objective of Juror Appreciation Week is to show past and prospective jurors that their contributions are valued by the court. "Thousands of criminal and civil cases require a jury to decide the question of guilt or fault," (last name) said. "When people do not respond to jury questionnaires, it reduces the pool of people who should be involved in shaping the justice system and may even cause a delay in getting cases tried. The importance of serving and giving time to the community in this manner cannot be overstated."

(last name) added that the (name) Court has implemented several changes to enhance the jury duty experience including: (list improvements). "We want every juror to feel appreciated and to know that we value their time and commitment."

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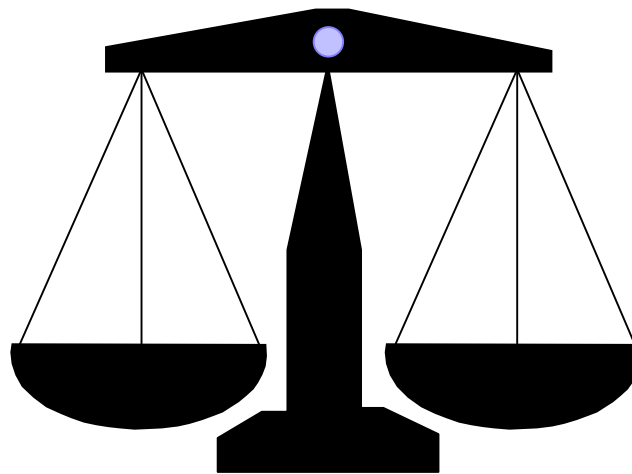


The Superior Court of California, County of Orange,  
Celebrates . . .

# JUROR APPRECIATION WEEK

## May 11–15, 1998

*A special “thank you” to all past, present and future  
jurors.*



*Jury Service —  
Your right,  
Your responsibility!*

**Sample: Certificate of Appreciation—Juror Appreciation Week**  
**Superior Court of California, County of Orange**

# *Certificate of Appreciation*

*Let the record show that . . .*

Trial by jury is the foundation of our system of justice. Your role in the system is as vital as that of the judge and attorneys. By participating as a juror, you help to insure the preservation of liberty and justice.

*Jury Appreciation Week*  
*May 11–15, 1998*

The Coordinated Courts of Orange County hereby take this opportunity to extend their appreciation and recognition of the important and vital role you play in the justice system as a juror.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jane Doe  
Jury Commissioner



## WE NEED YOU AS A JUROR

The Los Angeles County trial courts, comprising the Los Angeles Superior Court and 24 municipal courts, strive to improve public justice and welcome you, our jurors of Los Angeles, past, present and future. More than 200 years ago, the brilliant minds that shaped the federal Constitution gave it a guarantee in the form of the sixth amendment: the right to trial by jury. Why?

The short answer is our nation's founding on a persistent questioning of governmental authority and the institution of "checks and balances" in governing. Through jury trials and other institutional safety measures, the People have a direct say about who has violated the law—civil and criminal—and it's not one person deciding the facts, it's 12. The deliberative process of a jury trial is about the only place where all people are equal in how they influence the process and its conclusion, no matter where they live, what they do for a living or their politics.

Yes, jury service can be a sacrifice. Jurors who are employed sometimes lose their regular pay and juror pay is very little. Just about everyone who serves is inconvenienced, at least a little. But the importance of serving and giving time to the community in this manner cannot be overstated, and during Jury Appreciation Week, we hope everyone thinks about it.

Thousands of criminal and civil cases require a jury to decide the question of guilt or fault. When people do not respond to jury questionnaires, it reduces the pool of people who should be involved in shaping justice and may even cause a delay in getting cases tried. In most instances, it takes 40–60 people to begin to impanel a

jury. As jury selection (*voir dire*) proceeds, jurors are excused until 12 (and a few alternates) are picked who are not objectionable to either side. Multiply that by the hundreds of courtrooms around the county that are involved in trying cases, and it adds up quickly.

When there is a shortage of available jurors, criminal cases receive priority. In the past, this has caused a delay in taking civil actions to trial because all available jurors were assigned to the criminal courts until it was clear there would be an adequate supply. Delays in civil dispositions can cost parties millions of dollars cumulatively, because the civil courts resolve billions of dollars in disputes annually. That keeps commerce flowing. If businesses and neighbors cannot resolve a dispute because the available jurors are sitting on criminal cases, its impact is felt by many, not simply the parties to the action. The uncertainty of a dispute unresolved creates its own problems, and by ensuring enough people step forward to serve as jurors, the Los Angeles County trial courts attempt to facilitate a public justice system that works with relative speed and fairness.

There are many improvements the courts and legislature are striving to implement so that service to the community is less difficult and participation is that much greater: a true cross-section of the community. We are aiming to reduce "downtime" and increase efficiency in the service each juror provides. Thank you for participating and keeping the system strong.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRIALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES?

Many are curious about the differences between "our" system of criminal justice and that of other countries. In Russia, for example, criminal prosecutions are considerably different. There, the victim's family members are not only permitted to question the accused, they are *obligated* to do so. Indeed, family members are permitted to address the jury in summation with few of the restrictions that are placed on lawyers. In that regard, while prosecutors are typically not permitted to raise prior convictions of any kind—even if the defendant takes the stand and testifies in his own behalf—or violent acts that were not the subject of a prior prosecution, family members can inject those incidents in summation without provoking a mistrial, which does not exist in the Russian system.

And rather than a unanimous verdict in criminal cases, in Russia, only 7 of the 12 jurors need to support an acquittal or conviction. If they split evenly, an acquittal would be automatic.

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Jury  
Appreciation  
Week  
1997



## **WELCOME TO JURY APPRECIATION WEEK 1997, IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

## **WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR JURY TRIALS?**

Jury trials have been in existence for nearly 1,000 years, even before the Norman Conquest in Great Britain. It began as a means of eliminating "blood feuds" between "clans"—largely extended families. Cases were tried by calling 12 "venitmen" who were chosen because of their personal knowledge of the parties or accused and the facts and circumstances of the matter to be tried.

Today, jurors are chosen from a broad cross-section of the community. Qualifications include: A juror must be a U.S. citizen and county resident, over the age of 18 with no felony convictions. Rather than intimate knowledge of the facts of the case or of the parties, jurors are now selected to hear cases in which they do not have any preconceived notions about the matter before them. This ensures the parties will receive a fair trial because bias is reduced or eliminated.

As our technology develops,

jurors will benefit in many ways because of a range of tools that will be incorporated into courtrooms. This will enable the parties and judges to present information necessary to understand complex issues without delay, interruptions and other distractions that can interfere with processing and synthesizing this information.

In the new age courtroom, voice-activated video cameras will be placed in strategic positions around the courtroom with a sufficiently large monitor like those now found in the seatbacks of some airlines, so that jurors will not have to strain to observe crucial evidence. With a five-on-one monitor, all cameras will be activated, but the largest area will be targeted on the person speaking or the object being displayed.

"Real time" court reporting is the transcription of stenographer notes into the spoken word of a witness (or any one involved in the action) within seconds of its being taken down by a court reporter. This system, used in a few courtrooms already, will

permit judges to review objections and other evidentiary points of law without long interruptions in the flow of evidence. It will also help the hearing impaired to understand testimony without being excluded from the process.

Moreover, with translation programs, foreign languages can and will be transcribed into English so that the pace of testimony can keep an even flow, rather than the delay that is frequently the case in today's proceedings. This will be particularly helpful because of the numerous languages and dialects that are spoken in California—over 200!

Lawyers will have electronic podiums to control the presentation of exhibits. Cases involving numerous pieces of evidence will be downloaded onto CD-ROM discs that will have bar codes and computerized indices which will permit jurors to quickly and easily scan for review during deliberations. Even testimony can be reduced to CD-ROM applications so that descriptions can be heard with the same inflections and emphasis as was presented during the trial.

These tools and others that will be developed in the near future will ensure the institution of public justice is something we can all be proud of.

## **WHAT ARE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY TRIAL COURTS DOING?**

In 1996, the Los Angeles Superior Court, the largest court system in the world, with 12 district courthouses scattered around the county, staffing over 300 bench officers, received 331,779 filings. Family law filings, which include dissolutions of marriage, adoptions and other similar proceedings, made up the largest single subject of cases, totaling 143,174 filings. Criminal cases numbered 48,781. Civil actions involving contracts and other disputes totaled 68,319.

The superior courts were also concluding cases, and a total of 222,483 were disposed of by dismissal, settlement or judgment. Just about as many criminal cases were disposed of—45,189—as were filed. The courts concluded more automobile related personal injury cases (15,396) than were filed, in keeping with a California trend which has seen a greater than 40% reduction in personal injury filings statewide over the past six years. Family law matter dispositions lagged behind the pace of new filings with 86,818 closed files.

During 1996, over 4,100 jury trials were conducted in the superior courts; 3,000 were criminal cases. The municipal courts conducted an additional 2,200 jury trials, including 1,741 criminal cases. Although 2,827,145 jury affidavits were mailed, over 568,000 (20%) persons did not respond and over 1,282,953 persons were excused. The majority of those excused claimed financial hardship and the next largest segment claimed medical infirmities. In the end, 168,122 jurors served in our county's courtrooms.

## TOOL: Exit Survey Questionnaire

### How Would You Rate Your Experience as a Juror?

We want to know what you thought about your jury duty so that we can make the experience the most rewarding possible to future jurors. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and return the form to (designate area).

1. The amount of time I spent waiting was:  
☐ too much      ☐ just about right      ☐ not enough
2. The information I received during my service was:  
☐ not enough      ☐ just right      ☐ too much
3. If you thought you didn't receive enough information, what information would you have liked to receive? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did you like most about your service? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did you like least about your service? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Were you treated with courtesy by all court staff?  
☐ yes      ☐ no      If no, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Were court facilities clean and organized?  
☐ yes      ☐ no      If no, which areas need attention? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How would you describe your overall experience?  
☐ very frustrating      ☐ frustrating      ☐ positive      ☐ very positive

What suggestions would you make to improve jury service?

